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Ranking Member Ruppertsberger Statement on Allegations of So Called Stand Down Order in 2012 Benghazi Attacks

(Washington, DC) – Congressman C.A. Dutch Ruppertsberger (D-MD), Ranking Member on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, released the following statement in response to the latest allegations of a so called stand down order in 2012 Benghazi attacks.

“The bipartisan, unanimously adopted report by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) found that, prior to the CIA security team departing for the Temporary Mission Facility (TMF), the Annex leadership deliberated thoughtfully, reasonably, and quickly about whether further security could be provided to the team. Although some security officers voiced a greater urgency to depart for the compound, no evidence was ever found by the Committee that CIA personnel were ever told to stand down. This finding is consistent with the Senate's report on Benghazi, as well.

The security officers and contractors told HPSCI about the roughly 25 minutes between the time that the Temporary Mission Facility alerted the Annex to being under attack and the time that the Annex team departed for the TMF to provide security support. The team said they were prepped and ready to go within minutes, but the senior CIA officers responsible for the welfare of all Annex personnel were concerned they might be sending their security team into an ambush so they tried to obtain better intelligence and heavy weapons before dispatching the team. In fact, a high ranking CIA official told the Committee that, had things had turned out differently and those sent to rescue the personnel at the TMF were killed on arrival, he knew he would be responding to criticism about why additional rescue plan options were not more thoroughly evaluated, and therefore, he would not second guess leadership decisions made on the ground that night.

After interviewing these individuals, including those writing the book, and all of the others on the ground that night, both Republicans and Democrats on the House Intelligence Committee and the Senate Intelligence Committee concluded that there was not, in fact, an order to stand down and no evidence was found to support such a claim.

The Chief and the team should be praised for their heroic efforts in the middle of a crisis, not second-guessed or criticized two years after the fact.”

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